

Bone Artifacts from the Reeve Site, Lake County, Ohio

by

James L. Murphy

Department of Geology, Case Western
Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio 44106

During the course of the 1968 excavations at the Reeve site, Lake County, Ohio, several interesting bone artifacts were discovered. Subsequent work at the site by Greg and Gary Waselkov, Eastlake, Ohio, has provided some additional bone artifacts that are worthy of note.

Perhaps the most unusual item is the elk antler phallus illustrated in Figure 1. It was found at the very edge of the bluff on which the Reeve site lies during the Cleveland Natural Science Museum excavations of 1968. Although similar objects of clay have been described, (Ritchie 1947), I do not know of any previously reported bone or antler phalli. It is this specimen, incidentally, that Brose (1973: 32) has erroneously ascribed to his "intermediate component" at the South Park site, Cuyahoga County, Ohio. Apparently the specimen has been removed from the labelled tray in which it was left at the Museum; while this mistake would explain the confusion about which site the artifact is from, I am at a loss to explain how the artifact could be assigned to a particular component at the *wrong* site.

The elk antler hoe and deer bone beamer are of interest because of their bearing upon the question of "Whittlesey Focus" relationships with the Fort Ancient material culture. Griffin (1943: 199) has noted that the antler hoe "does not occur commonly outside Fort

Ancient, as it is not characteristic of Iroquoian" The bone beamer, according to Griffin, "is very common at Fort Ancient sites, but is not a determinant or diagnostic trait, since it occurs at western Iroquoian, Fisher, and Aztalan sites." Greenman (1935: 16) has described antler hoes or "gouges" from the Reeve Site, but this article seems to be the first report of the bone beamer from this site.

An antler flaker and a turkey metatarsal awl are also illustrated in Figure 1, but require little comment. Of greater interest are the two turkey metatarsal awls illustrated in Figure 2 from the Waselkov collection, representing as they do, both the notched and unnotched forms. Griffin (1943: 200) has suggested that the notched metatarsal awl is "an endemic trait of the Fort Ancient Aspect." Greenman has illustrated (1935: fig. 15) a broken, notched metatarsal awl from the Reeve site.

Other types of bone awls recovered in the Museum excavations are enumerated in Table 1. It is of some interest that of all of the many *Ictalurus* (catfish) spines recovered from the Reeve site, only one bore any trace of use as an awl. Bone awls appear to be slightly more common at the Reeve site than at Fairport Harbor, to judge from their frequency in the Museum excavations.

The most common bone artifact found at

Table 1: Bone Artifacts from 1968 Excavations at the Reeve Site
Unit 0-1 0-2 0-3 0-4 0-7 1-1 1-2 1-3

Antler phallus						1		
Antler arrow point	1		1					
Antler flaker		1	3	1	1			
Antler drift		1	1	1	2	2	1	
Antler chisel or hoe							1	
Bone bead	1	5	9	9	4	13	13	1
Bone bead stock	1							
Bird bone awl		1	2					1
Bone splinter awl				3	1	1		
Raccoon baculum awl							1	
<i>Ictalurus</i> awl					1			
Hairpin fragment			1		1	1		
Beaver incisor chisel		1						
Drilled animal canine				1				

the Reeve site is the bird bone bead. Mean and median length of the 50 complete specimens are 26.1 mm and 26.2 mm respectively, not significantly different from the Fairport Harbor sample (Murphy 1971: 33). Bead length ranges from 11.4 mm to 47.0 mm in the Reeve sample. Animal teeth pendants appear to be less common at the Reeve site than at Fairport Harbor, though samples from the two sites are so small that the difference in number may be fortuitous.

The large bone fish hook (Fig. 3) was found by the author in 1973 during the course of excavations made to obtain a charcoal sample suitable for radio-carbon-dating. The fish hook is made of deer bone and has a very slight notch for attachment of the line. Greenman does not record any fish hooks from the Reeve site, and their rarity both at Reeve and Fairport Harbor is remarkable in view of the large amount of fish bone refuse found in the midden at these two sites.



Fig. 1 (Murphy) Deer antler flaker, elk antler phallus, deer bone beamer, elk antler hoe or gouge, and turkey metatarsal awl. All artifacts from Cleveland Natural Science Museum collections.

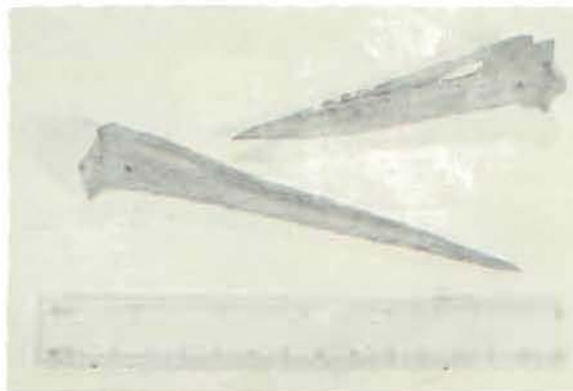


Fig. 2 (Murphy) Notched and unnotched turkey metatarsal awls from the Waselkov collection.

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Fig. 3 (Murphy) Deer bone fish hook found by the author in 1973.